

Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council Meeting Minutes, December 7, 2017

Attending:

Bob Burke, Barbara Darnell, Steve Feinstein, Groot Gregory, Nathaniel Lichtin, Srdj Nedeljkovic, Amy Wayne

Ex Officio:

John Rice, Ward City Councilor, Ward 5
Cheryl Lappin, Ward City Councilor, Ward 8

Guests:

Ann Berwick, City of Newton, Department of Sustainability
Linda Brennan, Newton Highlands Resident
Andrea Downs, Waban Area Council, Ward 5 At-Large City Councilor, (Elect)
Robert Lee, Newton Highlands Resident
Bethany Sanderling, Newton Highlands Area Councilor, (Elect)
Mary Beth Shipman, Newton Highlands Resident
Barbara Smiley, Hope Fountain Replacement Project

Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report

The Secretary's reports for November was reviewed and approved with email sent corrections from Nathaniel. The Treasurer's Report included the following. As of December 3, 2017, we had \$16,875.00 in our checking account; \$11,665 .00 is currently available plus \$120.00 available in cash.

Presentation on "Newton Power Choice"

Ann Berwick, Co-Director of the City of Newton's Department of Sustainability appeared before our Council to brief us on "Newton Power Choice" that the City will be providing for both residents and businesses beginning next year.

The program will include the option to upgrade to 100% renewable electricity, all generated by renewable energy projects in Newton England. The objective is to reduce Newton's greenhouse gas emissions, encourage the development of additional renewable energy projects in New England and support these initiatives with job-based projects favorable to local businesses. The overall goal is to allow Newton to set a Massachusetts record for the most people choosing 100% renewable electricity.

Ann went into great detail stressing the voluntary nature of the program, various consumer protection guarantees and what the City has already accomplished to build a strong foundation for the program here. She couldn't give a firm statement about whether the program would increase or decrease electrical costs for participating consumers, but felt comfortable saying that either an increase or decrease would be quite modest.

Ann said she was at tonight's meeting primarily to ask us to spread the word throughout our Highlands service area about the availability of the program and the roll that using non fossil fuel energy sources could play in reducing greenhouse emissions. Several Council members and guests stated they would be interested in participating in the program.

Response from Pine Crest Road Developer

It will also be recalled from last month's meeting that our Area Council voted unanimously to send a letter to the Pine Crest Road developer stating that we have listened to the concerns of the affected homeowners along with our hope that he will listen to and work with them to collaborate on solutions and modifications acceptable to both parties.

In response to this letter, Mary Beth Shipman, representing the developer, appeared before our Council to articulate the steps they feel they have taken to accommodate the concerns of the Pine Crest Road homeowners. She noted that the developer has already held four meetings with the homeowners to seek common ground.

During that time, the developer agreed to reduce the number of houses from 15 to 8, save some trees originally scheduled for removal and make roadway changes less intrusive for the homeowners. She stressed that the developer still wants to reach a friendly agreement with homeowners and does not want to go the 40 B route. She claimed, however, that they may be forced to go this route if a consensus can't be reached.

Steve stated that it's time to bring both sides together. He felt certain that our Council would be willing to expedite this in any way we could. Other Council members emphatically asked that the developer and affected homeowners to keep the dialogue open.

Replacing the Hope Fountain

Barbara Smiley reported that the current Hope Fountain is broken and can't be repaired. We need a new one made of aluminum and it will cost approximately \$1,300.00. There will be an additional \$300.00 charge for shipping for shipping.

Barbara asked if our Area Council would be willing to support this project and the consensus was that we would. Barbara then stated she would put together a formal proposal for the project and Srdj stated we would put it on the agenda for January's meeting.

Post Card Outreach Proposal

Steve recounted that he has met with city officials to follow up on the proposal to send postcards to homeowners and residents in our service area to request their email addresses. It will be recalled that this initiative is being proposed so we can begin compiling a master communications resource. A motion was made by Steve to approve \$750.00 for this proposal. It was seconded by Barbara and approved 6-0-0.

Items in Brief

- The new Area Council will be sworn in at City Hall on Thursday, January 4th at 6 pm.
- John noted that the skating rink is moving ahead on schedule and one bit of good news is that we will be able to reuse the plastic lining from last year's program.
- The 2018 Winter Soup Social will be held on Saturday, February 10th at the Hyde Center. John asked if our Area Council would appropriate \$250.00 to help support this gala affair. It was moved and seconded on a 6-0-0 vote.
- The City's take on what they would like to see come out of transportation options in the Needham Street project will be presented on December 11th from 5-00-7:30 pm in a forum at 27 Christina Street.
- Steve noted that there are new and promising emerging technologies for underground cables that we should push the City and State to examine.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Bob Burke, Secretary, Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

